



Cari Amici,

Welcome to volume 13.1 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino*! Given the loss of our friend and colleague Robert Viscusi, the passing of Danny Aiello, and the coronavirus pandemic, *il Bollettino* comes to you during this most challenging period in the lives of many of our readers.

Some of you may very well remember World War II; others the tragedy of September 11, 2001, for sure; others still some natural disaster such as a hurricane or tornado. But something of this magnitude that is the novel coronavirus brings us back to 1918 for anything similar. Two champions on the front line are our own Governor Andrew Cuomo and Dr. Anthony Fauci, both native New Yorkers. We highlight them and all they are doing to fight the virus and keep us as well informed as possible on the progress that our city, state, and country are making.

Robert Viscusi was a dear friend of the Calandra Institute; he visited often and collaborated in many of

our activities. In addition to his administrative charge and teaching at Brooklyn College—where he was a favorite professor of many a student—he was also a major voice in Italian American cultural and literary studies. We remember him here with great fondness and equal sadness.

For close to a decade we enjoyed the privilege of Danny Aiello as one of our celebrity friends. Always with a smile, he answered the call when we went knocking. He, too, will be greatly missed. Fortunately, he leaves behind a prodigious number of excellent films and albums.

We continue to enjoy support from many. As always, we are extremely appreciative of the unyielding support of Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez's Office of CUNY and Interim President William Tramontano's Office at Queens College. They and their staff continue to facilitate our greater development in all aspects.

In solidarity,
Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING

The Calandra Institute, US Speaks Italian, and Società Dante Alighieri NY, co-sponsored a webinar series in February–April 2020: HOW TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AP™ ITALIAN COURSE. The program focused on practical methods for developing an effective AP™ course, introduced new teachers to the material, and provided experienced teachers with new guidelines and ideas to help students achieve success in their AP™ course and exam. The webinars were presented by Roberta Pennasilico, Italian Instructor at Naples Middle High School, DODEA. The series was made possible by a grant from the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

On the cover: GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORANDI, *Collectio plantarum*, 1737. Bulb and leaves, possibly of a Squill (*Scilla* sp.), with inflorescence of a Yucca (*Yucca* sp.).

National Organization of Italian Americans in Film and Television

IN PIAZZA

The National Organization of Italian Americans in Film and Television (NOIAFT) was established in 2019 to connect and empower Italian Americans to achieve their goals in the film and television industries. NOIAFT assembles teams for projects on any scale, and provides a network for internships, employment opportunities, mentoring, speaker series, workshops, scholarships, and fundraising for creative works.

NOIAFT spotlights work created by and for Italian Americans and those of Italian descent. NOIAFT founder Taylor Taglianetti is a recent graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts. In 2018, she was one of twenty students selected by the National Italian American Foundation to travel to Italy. Taglianetti has received scholarships from the Columbus Citizens Foundation, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Charles and Lucille King Family Foundation.



Taylor Taglianetti interviewing producer Domenico Procacci at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FALL 2019 SEMESTER

MASTER CLASS

Master Class in Italian Cinema

This three-part series was offered in partnership with the Office of Academic Initiatives and Strategic Innovation at CUNY's Graduate Center and the Academy of Italian Cinema David di Donatello Awards. The program was founded and directed by Eugenia Paulicelli of the Graduate Center and Queens College, and co-directed by awards consultant Massimo Mascolo. The series offered a deeper understanding of the art of Italian cinema from its origins to the present day.

SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION OPENING

Dove il sì suona: A Journey through the Italian Language

This exhibition illustrated the evolution of the Italian language over the centuries, differences among the geographical areas, varying uses of Italian, and its close relationship with Italian culture as well as other languages. Symposium participants included Hermann Haller, Queens College, CUNY; Silvana Mangione,

General Council of Italians Abroad; Anthony Julian Tamburri, Comitato Società Dante Alighieri di New York; and Paola Ureni, College of Staten Island, CUNY.

LECTURE

Giuseppe Prezzolini in New York: Promotion and Propaganda of Italian Language and Culture in the USA 1930-1940

In 1930, Giuseppe Prezzolini, an accomplished Italian intellectual, arrived in New York, where he remained until 1962. He dedicated himself to promoting Italian language and culture in the United States, principally as director of Casa Italiana at Columbia University from 1930 to 1940. This lecture analyzed Prezzolini's work and his interaction with the Italian government and Italian American community during that crucial period. Participating scholars were Fabio Girelli Carasi, Brooklyn College, CUNY; Roberto Dolci, Università per Stranieri di Perugia; Mark Pietralunga, Florida State University; Gennaro Sangiuliano, TG2, Rai; and Anthony Julian Tamburri, Queens College, CUNY.

ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

ITALICS

In March 2020, *Italics* highlighted Women's History Month with a special one-hour program. The segment featured four contributors to the landmark anthology *Future: il domani narrato dalle voci di oggi*, edited by Igiaba Scego (Effequ, 2019). *Italics* interviewed Camilla Hawthorne, Marie Moise, Angelica Pesarini, and Candice Whitney, who recounted their experiences as women of African and Italian descent. They discussed a variety of topics including aspects of colonialism; children born during the Fascist regime of Italian fathers and African mothers; current events in immigration and national borders; and the growing resistance to racial injustice in Italy.



Candice Whitney and Camilla Hawthorne

The Calandra Institute announces a new video platform, **Calandra TV**, as a complement to the regular *Italics* television program on CUNY TV.



Italics premieres the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 pm and is rebroadcast the following Wednesday at 10:30 am and 3:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 am, and Sunday at 6:30 pm on CUNY TV Channels 25.3, 75, 77, and 30, in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

Italics can be viewed on demand at



cuny.tv/show/italics



@ItalicsTV



youtube.com/ItalicsTV

LEADERS IN THE TIME OF CORONA

The Calandra Institute is proud to feature two Italian Americans who are leading our state and country during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. We recognize Doctor Anthony Fauci and Governor Andrew Cuomo as they guide the government and health of our society in this unprecedented time.

Doctor Anthony Fauci

DOCTOR ANTHONY FAUCI has emerged as the face of America's fight against coronavirus. He is candid and coherent, translating complex medical information into everyday language while neither exaggerating nor downplaying the circumstances. He has been praised as the most famous doctor in America, and the man whose compassion and calm helped the U.S. make otherwise impossible strides in confronting this public health crisis.

Anthony Stephen Fauci was born in 1940, in Brooklyn, New York, to Stephen and Eugenia Fauci. His paternal grandparents, Antonio Fauci and Calogera Guardino, were from Sciacca, Italy. His maternal grandmother, Raffaella Trematerra, was from Naples, Italy, and his maternal grandfather, Giovanni Abys, was born in Switzerland. His great grandparents emigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth century.

Anthony Fauci grew up in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, where his father, a Columbia University educated pharmacist, owned a neighborhood drugstore. Fauci attended Regis High School in New York City where he graduated in 1958, and received a B.S. from the College of the Holy Cross in 1962. In 1966, he graduated first in his class at Cornell University Medical College, whose library he helped build as an undergraduate working construction over the summers.

Fauci joined the National Institutes of Health in 1968, and was appointed, in 1984, director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a position he still holds in 2020. In that role he is responsible for

an extensive portfolio of basic and applied research on infectious and immune-mediated illnesses. He has been at the forefront of U.S. efforts to contend with viral diseases such as HIV, SARS, MERS, Ebola, and the new coronavirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. He has advised six presidents and in 2008 was awarded the highest U.S. civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, for his role in AIDS relief. Fauci is a member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force established in January 2020.

Fauci is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, the American Philosophical Society, and the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, as well as other numerous professional societies including the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the American Association of Immunologists. He serves on the editorial boards of many scientific journals; as an editor of *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*; and as author, coauthor, or editor of more than 1,000 scientific publications.

Fauci has been a visiting professor at many medical centers, and received thirty honorary doctorate degrees from universities in the United States and abroad.

Anthony Fauci married Christine Grady in 1985. Grady is chief of the Department of Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center. The couple has three adult daughters: Jennifer, Megan, and Alison.



Governor Andrew Cuomo

GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO is in the national spotlight as a prominent leader, overseeing one of the nation's coronavirus hotspots. The chief executive of New York state is delivering daily news conferences with a serious and calm demeanor. His briefings are articulate, consistent, and empathetic. Cuomo's handling of the crisis has fostered a nationwide following, with some news outlets calling him "America's governor." Even before the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in New York, Cuomo's office began sketching out a series of questions concerning the extent of his authority to confront what he imagined would become a global pandemic.

Andrew Mark Cuomo was born in the Queens borough of New York City in 1957, the elder son of five children born to lawyer and later governor of New York, Mario Cuomo and Matilda (née Raffa) Cuomo. His paternal grandparents were from Nocera Inferiore and Tramonti in southern Italy. His maternal grandparents were from Sicily (his grandfather from Messina). His elder sister is noted radiologist Margaret Cuomo, and younger brother, Chris Cuomo, is the host of CNN's Cuomo Prime Time. Chris' interviews with the governor during the pandemic, filled with familial banter, have gone viral. "Thank you for coming back to the show," Chris said in one recent segment. "Mom told me I had to," his brother quipped in response.

Cuomo graduated from Archbishop Molloy High School in 1975. He received a B.A. from Fordham University in the Bronx in 1979, and a J.D. from Albany Law School of Union University, New York in 1982.

Cuomo began his career working as the campaign manager for his father Mario Cuomo, who served as governor of New York for three terms, from 1983 to 1994; then as an assistant district attorney in New York

City before entering private law practice. He founded Housing Enterprise for the Less Privileged (HELP USA) and was appointed chair of the New York City Homeless Commission, a position he held from 1990 to 1993.

In 1993, Cuomo was appointed Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development in the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. From 1997 to 2001, he served as the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

In 2006, Cuomo was elected Attorney General of New York, and in 2010 successfully ran for governor of New York, having won the election by a landslide 63% against Carl Paladino. Cuomo is currently serving his third term after winning his second reelection in 2018.

In 2013, Cuomo signed into law the NY SAFE Act, described as the toughest gun control law in the United States. In 2014, the Cuomo administration announced a ban on hydraulic fracturing in New York state, following a long-awaited study started years earlier in which New York state health officials cited significant public health risks associated with fracking. In 2017, the Cuomo administration awarded more than \$7 million, financed from large bank settlements, in grants to New York colleges to offer courses to New York prisoners.

In addition, Cuomo oversaw the passage of a law legalizing same-sex marriage in New York; creation of the United States Climate Alliance, a group of states committed to fighting climate change by following the terms of the Paris Climate Accords; paid family leave; an increase in the minimum wage; and wage equality.

Andrew Cuomo was married to Kerry Kennedy, daughter of Robert F. Kennedy and Ethel Skakel Kennedy, from 1990 to 2005. They have three daughters: Cara Ethel, Mariah Matilda, and Michaela Andrea.



ITALIAN AMERICAN REVIEW 10.1 ABSTRACTS

Performative Ethnicity, Embodied Memory, and Oral History in Narratives from the Bronx Italian American History Initiative, by Kathleen LaPenta and Jacqueline Reich

The Bronx Italian American History Initiative is a community-engaged research project that traces the history of Italians and Italian Americans in the Bronx in the twentieth century through filmed individual oral histories. Our analysis of these oral histories elucidates how aspects of Italian American identity are continuously brought into being by a set of performative practices and how ethnic markers and their meanings change over time. Using both written and oral sources, our study works to wrest ethnicity from an essentialist discourse and to reframe it as always already referential and symbolic. In this paper we look at a subset of those interviews from residents of the Belmont section of the Bronx, also known today as “The Little Italy of the Bronx,” in order to analyze the relationship between symbolic and performative ethnicity as it relates to geographic place, particularly a neighborhood that reflects the seismic demographic shifts the Bronx has undergone in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Forgotten Story of the Bombings of the Italian Church of Saints Peter and Paul in San Francisco, by Michael P. Carroll

During the mid-1920s, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul (SSPP), an Italian national church in the North Beach area of San Francisco, was bombed on four separate occasions. As the result of an elaborate police trap, a bomber was shot and killed during a fifth bombing attempt and a supposed accomplice arrested. Although the bombings were a mystery that was never solved, that did not prevent different groups—the Salesian fathers at SSPP, the police, the press, members of the public—from offering different explanations for the attacks. This article traces how those explanations developed and how they were shaped by issues and concerns important to Italian Americans during this period, paying special attention to those that the clerical leadership at SSPP tried to promote and the ones they tried to discourage. In the end, it would appear, these clergymen were successful in promoting the narrative that was most acceptable to the larger American public (even if it was the least likely explanation) and in causing later commentators to overlook a very plausible, though potentially problematic, story that the police brought forth.

AD MEMORIUM

by Anthony Julian Tamburri

DANNY AIELLO: AN ACTOR IN SEARCH OF SELF (1933–2019)

The *New York Times* opens its obituary of Danny Aiello as follows (December 13, 2019): “A memorable character actor on both stage and screen, Mr. Aiello [earned] an Academy Award nomination for his role in Spike Lee’s 1989 film.” A “memorable” actor worthy of “an Academy Award nomination,” for sure. That he was only a “character actor” actor, on the other hand, is debatable. Like many, he began in small roles; not like many, he debuted as an actor on stage at age 37 and in films at 40. So, he began a bit late, to say the least.

From president of a local union for bus drivers to the job of bouncer at the famous Improv, Danny Aiello began his film career as a baseball player opposite Robert De Niro in *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1973). Once he passed through what we might call an “internship” of “character-actor” roles, Danny Aiello was a leading and co-leading actor as well. *Defiance* (1980) and *Fort Apache, The Bronx* (1981) were two films in which he had either the co-lead or a prominent role. And then, of course, there is *Moonstruck* (1987), in which he played the classic *mammone* (mamma’s boy).

Aiello excelled especially in those roles in films that had to do with family and, not as ironic as it might seem, with

Italian Americana in some manner or another. Hence, I am also reminded of his lead role in the TV program *Dellavventura* (1997–1998) or, one of his favorite films—as he admitted to me almost ten years ago—*Once Around* (1991), not to forget other great performances such as the above-referenced *Do the Right Thing* (1989) and *2 Days in the Valley* (1996). Two of my favorite films of his are *29th Street* (1991) and *Dinner Rush* (2000), this last film having gotten lost in its initial distribution period in September 2001 but now considered a classic by many.

While acting was his primary profession, he also released several albums with the characteristic big-band as back-up from 2004 to 2011. Danny Aiello also penned an autobiography *I Only Know Who I Am When I Am Somebody Else: My Life on the Street, On the Stage, and in the Movies* (2014).

I had the privilege of interviewing Aiello in 2013 for Italian Heritage and Culture Month, which aired on our *Italics* program on CUNY TV (<https://tv.cuny.edu/show/italics/PR2002376>). He visited with us again one evening a few years back, after we screened *Dinner Rush*. Danny and the film’s director, Bob Giraldi, graciously engaged the audience afterwards for a most delightful Q&A.

AD MEMORIUM

by Anthony Julian Tamburri

REMEMBERING ROBERT VISCUSI: ERUDITION, LARGESSE, BENEFICENCE (1941–2020)

It is with profound sadness to have to write about the death of our dear friend Robert Viscusi, professor emeritus of Brooklyn College. He died January 19, 2020 at Lenox Hill Hospital after a valiant battle with cancer. He is survived by his beloved wife, Nancy, and two children, Robert Jr. and Victoria.

The grandson of immigrants from Limatola (province of Benevento) and Salle (province of Chieti), Bob grew up like many grandchildren of the 1940s and later decades whose grandparents did not teach them Italian; for it was, as we have come to know, the “language of the enemy.” But Bob, as an adult, thought differently. A proud Italian American who realized the usefulness of language, Bob and his family spent the 1986–1987 academic year in Italy, where they all studied Italian. Bob’s Italian, in fact, was clearly beyond near-native by every sense of the notion, his Italian was as fluid as anyone’s. Further still, he could readily shift from one language to the other with the natural ease of the bilingual speaker he was.

For those of us who knew Bob well, we knew a kind man, someone who was always respectfully inquisitive and concerned about his friends and, at the same time, much the cheerleader in championing them and their accomplishments. He was, as well, a great advocate of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute; he made it known to many, and we remain ever the more grateful.

I first met Bob at the 1987 annual conference of the American Italian Historical Association, and we struck up a friendship that lasted until his passing. At first, it was based on our work. My own professional preparation—an Italianist and not an Americanist—moved me to come to Italian American Studies through the back door of methodology and theory. Indeed, Bob’s work guided me greatly, especially in these first few years. His ideas and the rhetorical craft through which he articulated them served as a model for me; it continues as much today.

Bob was fundamental to the development of Bordighera Press and its journal *VIA* and book series *VIA FOLIOS*. One of his yet numerous ground-breaking articles, “Breaking the Silence,” opened the journal’s inaugural issue. In like fashion, his keenly satiric, genial long poem, “An Oration on the Most Recent Death of Christopher Columbus,” was the stimulus for us to found our first book series, *VIA FOLIOS*. In the later years we also published his collection of sonnets, which is, in reality, an epic poem; *Ellis Island* earned a Star Review from *Publishers Weekly*, which closed as follows: “[T]he sonnets are far from uniform, at times manifesting as short stories, at other times as short bursts of philosophical inquiry or bursts of pure song. This is a new delicacy for aficionados of creative poetry and an anthem of sorts for those who—however far removed from immigration—occasionally feel displaced from home.”

Bob wore numerous hats throughout his career: highly esteemed professor, cultural theorist, literary critic, novelist, and poet are some of the monikers we can ascribe to him. He was also a cultural broker: Along with Theresa Aiello and Peter Carravetta, Bob cofounded the Italian American Writers Association in 1991, for which he formulated its three rules: (1) Read one another;

(2) Write or be written; (3) Buy each other’s books. It is a triad of exhortations that he has articulated throughout the years, whenever he had the opportunity to do so.

In addition to Bob’s many books, we shall surely remember especially his award-winning novel, *Astoria* (2003), and his critical magnum opus, *Buried Caesars and Other Secrets of Italian American Writing* (2006), considered by some to be “the best book

written on any ethnic group in America or anywhere else. . . . This is an astonishing, gorgeous work” (Matthew Frye Jacobson).

I close this brief encomium with an example of the big, generous heart that Bob possessed. In August 2019 we lost another cultural broker of the Italian American experience, Francesco Durante. Bob and Francesco were dear friends, and Francesco’s unexpected passing was devastating for Bob as it was for many others. At the beginning of the last decade, Bob approached me and James Periconi about a major translation project: to render into English Francesco Durante’s ground-breaking anthology, *Italoamericana II*, a 900-plus-page tome originally published in Italy in 2005. We accepted, and for the subsequent two-plus years we spent just about every Friday going over translations, introductions, and bibliographies. What stood out for me were two things: (1) Bob’s incredible knowledge of and intellectual ability to articulate ever so masterfully the Italian immigrant phenomenon, and (2) his dedication to this project, his desire to present it as best as possible to a non-speaking Italian readership. He wanted to be sure that (1) the material that Francesco compiled was very well introduced to the English-speaking world, and (2) that the time and energy Francesco invested over the years in order to put together such a significant work were reflected in the presentation of his anthology in an English edition. This was no small task in making popular someone else’s work; generosity does not begin to describe Bob’s largesse and beneficence involved in such work.

Bob’s scholarly and creative works will live on precisely because they are so outstanding and hence beneficial to all. They will serve yet future generations of scholars as they engage in their own professional development of cultural and literary studies of the Italian diaspora. In general, Bob’s work—critical and creative—calls for an intellectual militancy and social activism, two components of Bob’s scholarly erudition that helps further create a process of interrogation essential to the changing awareness required of all who work within the world of Italian America. But Bob the person—he who could turn a phrase and make you smile, or formulate a theoretical notion and make you go “Hmmm”—shall be dearly missed. In the meantime, fortunately, through technology we shall have the opportunity to revisit with Bob, as we have a few recordings of him in the *Italics TV* archive (<https://www.youtube.com/user/ItalicsTV>).





ITALIAN AMERICAN REVIEW

The *Italian American Review* features scholarly articles about Italian American history and culture, as well as other aspects of the Italian diaspora. The journal embraces a wide range of professional concerns and theoretical orientations in the social sciences and cultural studies. The *Italian American Review* publishes book, film, and digital media reviews and is currently accepting article submissions.

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1 includes:

- Performative Ethnicity, Embodied Memory, and Oral History in Narratives from the Bronx Italian American History Initiative, by Kathleen LaPenta and Jacqueline Reich
- The Forgotten Story of the Bombings of the Italian Church of Saints Peter and Paul in San Francisco, by Michael P. Carroll

For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org.
Under the publications menu, click on *Italian American Review*.

SPRING 2020 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 — **CANCELLED**

Creating the New Right Ethnic in 1970s America: The Intersection of Anger and Nostalgia, RICHARD MOSS, Harrisburg Area Community College

Monday, May 4, 2020 — **CANCELLED**

Unwanted: Italian and Jewish Mobilization against Restrictive Immigration Laws, 1882–1965, MADDALENA MARINARI, Gustavus Adolphus College

WRITERS READ SERIES

Thursday, February 20, 2020

JOANNE MATTERA reads from *Vita: A Memoir: Growing up Italian, Coming Out, and Making a Life in Art* (Well-Fed Artist Press, 2019)

Monday, April 6, 2019 — **CANCELLED**

NADINA LASPINA reads from *Such a Pretty Girl: A Story of Struggle, Empowerment, and Disability Pride* (New Village Press, 2019)

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 — **CANCELLED**

JOANNA CLAPPS HERMAN reads from *When I am Italian: Quando sono italiana* (State University of New York Press, 2019)

DOCUMENTED ITALIANS FILM AND VIDEO SERIES

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Vado verso dove vengo (I'm Going Where I Came From) (2019), 63 minutes, NICOLA RAGONE, director

EXHIBITION

Dove il sì suona

A Journey through the Italian Language

Opened October 2019

Temporarily closed

Free and open to the public, all events begin at 6 pm at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor, New York NY 10036.

RSVP by calling (212) 642-2094. Seating is limited and cannot be reserved in advance.

